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SUBJECT: A GUIDE TO THE FORMAL POLITICAL PARTY LANDSCAPE IN DARFUR

¶1. (U) SUMMARY: Although the two CPA signatories - the Sudanese People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) and the National Congress Party (NCP) - form the basis of the Government of National Unity (GNU) and control most aspects of political life in Sudan (with the NCP controlling the North and the SPLM controlling the South), opposition parties with historical constituencies continue to operate despite significant restrictions, even in the troubled and controversial region of Darfur. Most of the political parties present in Khartoum are represented in Darfur. In North Darfur, the main political parties present are the National Congress Party, National Popular Congress Party, Umma National Party, Communist Party, Democratic Unionist Party (Merghani Branch), Democratic Unionist Party (Hindi Branch), Sudanese People's Liberation Movement and Sudanese Liberation Movement/Minni Minawi (SLM/MM). END SUMMARY.

¶2. (U) This message is meant to serve as an introduction and reference to the political parties active in Darfur for newly assigned officers, visitors, and Darfur watchers in Washington and elsewhere.

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National Congress Party (NCP)  
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¶3. (U) The National Congress Party (NCP) is the governing party in Sudan and is the senior partner in Sudan's GNU. The NCP was established in 1988 by key political figures in the former National Islamic Front (NIF) organization as well as other politicians. In the last legislative elections of December 2000, the party won 355 out of 360 seats in the national parliament. In that year's Presidential elections, President Bashir was re-elected with 86.5% of the vote. The NCP in North Darfur is headed by Othman Mohammed Yousif Kibbir, the Wali (governor) of North Darfur. Sixty-five percent of his cabinet are NCP members, including Ministers, Commissioners, Directors General of institutions and senior officials. NCP offices in North Darfur are co-located with the offices of the State Legislative Council. NCP membership in North Darfur is relatively small but controls many of the institutions of the state. According to the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), 25% of the government positions are to be given to women. This is not implemented by the NCP in North Darfur, which claims that there are no qualified female candidates for most of the senior positions.

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Popular Congress Party (PCP)  
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¶4. (U) The Popular Congress Party (PCP) split from the National Congress Party in 2000, after disagreements between President Bashir and former Chairman of the National Assembly and Parliamentary Spokesman Dr. Hassan Al Turabi. PCP advocates an Islamic state based on Islamic Sharia and rejects the concept of a secular, democratic state. Key PCP players in North Darfur are Mohammed

Aldouma Sabikulu, a business man, Mohammed Elsadig Adam, a bookstore keeper, and Hammza Al Hadi, civil servant. PCP meetings and activities are disrupted by the North Darfur security authorities, and its key figures are closely monitored closely by the National Intelligence and Security Service (NISS).

15. (U) PCP is one of the least popular parties in North Darfur, particularly among women and youth, who resent previous NIF policies. A local leader from the Fur community (who is a member of the Umma National Party) recalled that North Darfur state experienced hard times when the NIF was in control of the government during the first days of National Salvation Government rule. Most of the laws and regulations were based on a conservative interpretation of Islam. He also claimed that when Mohammed Aldouma Sabikulu, Head of the PCP in North Darfur, was the head of the North Darfur Legislative Council, he dismissed from their duties 80% of the women in government, particularly those in senior positions. During that period, he added, the main requirement for young graduates to secure employment with the government was to be affiliated with the National Islamic Front.

16. (U) PCP's Turabi and Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) leader Khalil Ibrahim were previously close associates, and PCP's Islamic ideology has led to many suspicions and accusations of collaboration between the two groups. However both Ibrahim and Turabi deny any ties between JEM and PCP. (Note: PCP reps have met with USG officials in El Fasher; however, after the May 10 JEM attack on Omdurman, meetings are low-key and occurred in individual members' homes. End note).

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National Umma Party (NUP)  
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17. (U) A majority of Darfurians are ostensibly and traditionally affiliated with the National Umma Party, due in part to the movements' roots in Darfur (the successor to the Mahdi was from Darfur), and to most Darfurians' deep commitment to Islam. NUP is a moderate Islamic, centrist political party led by Al Sadig Al Mahdi, who served twice as Prime Minister in Sudan, and was removed both times in military coups. The Umma Party was formed in 1945 on a platform advocating national independence for Sudan. After Sudan's independence in 1956, the platform of Umma party became equal democratic rights, equal rights of participation for all Sudanese citizens in their government regardless of gender, religion or ethnicity, and equal distribution of wealth and power. Some Darfurians are also drawn to the influential party leadership, who are descendants of the Mahdi, leader of the Mahdia revolution (1885) whose supporters were mainly from Darfur and Kordofan.

18. (U) In North Darfur, most of the National Umma Party leadership is well-educated and represents a variety of ethnic groups and tribes. Historically, most Umma Party supporters were from Berti African tribal origins, but lately there are some shifts as many Berti support the NCP (Note: The Wali of North Darfur is from the Berti tribe. End Note.) Key figures of the party in North Darfur include attorney Ismaeel Kitir Abdel Kareem, veterinarian Mohamed Adam Abdel Kareem, attorney Khaleel Tukras, and civil servant and women's rights activist Zahra Abdel Naeem. (Note: Although individual members regularly meet with USG officials, party leaders have declined to meet with FieldOffs since May 2008. End note)

19. (U) There are five active political factions within the Umma Party in Sudan, each claiming political legitimacy. Three of them are present in Darfur.

- Umma Party Reform and Renewal:

Headed by Mubarak Al Fadil, this faction supports the same platform as the Umma National Party. Al Fadil, who defected from the National Umma Party, formed the Umma Party Reform and Renewal Party and signed an agreement with the central government in 2003. Al Fadil later split with the government after a disagreement with Mr. Nafei Ali Nafei, Presidential Advisor for Political and Organizational Affairs over the Sudanese oil revenues. Al Fadil was expelled from the Central Government and was later accused of planning a military coup in 2007 and imprisoned for months. Although it has not been especially active in North Darfur, UPRR has an office in El Fasher, in the Al Ghadi residential area. The head of the North Darfur office is Mustafa Omer, Administrative Officer in the North Darfur Local Council.

- Umma Party General Leadership (UPGL):

At the federal level, Umma Party General Leadership is led by Dr. Al Sadiq Al Hadi Al Mahdi who is the first cousin of Al Sadiq Al Mahdi. Dr. Al Sadiq is a State Minister of Education for the state of Khartoum and also Vice Governor. The Umma Party General Leadership remains outside the Government of National Unity but has agreed on some basic objectives for the elections Darfur, and has agreed to continue discussions with the NCP during the interim period before elections. UPGL in North Darfur is headed by Mr. Mohammed Abdalla Masar, senior government official. It has approximately 50 members in North Darfur, but does not have an office.

-Federal Umma Party (FUP):

The FUP is led by Ahmed Babiker Nahar, State Minister of Environment and Physical Development at the federal level. Federal Umma Party shares the National Umma Party's platform. It was formed after the expulsion of Mubarak Al Fadil, head of Umma Party Reform and Renewal, from the government in 2007. Ahmed Babiker Nahar was the deputy Chairman of Umma Reform and Renewal before Al Fadil's expulsion, and acted as Al Fadil's right hand. However Nahar condemned Al Fadil's alleged coup attempt and created the Federal Umma Party in order to continue working with the Government of National Salvation. FUP has an office in Al Jeel residential area in El Fasher, and is headed by Mohammed Ali Hamid, former commissioner of Al Seraif Locality in North Darfur. It has very limited activities in Darfur, with a membership in North Darfur of approximately 100 individuals.

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Sudanese Communist Party (SCP)  
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¶10. (U) The Sudanese Communist Party was founded in Sudan in 1946. It was a major force in the country's politics and was one of the two most influential Communist parties in the Arab world (along with the Iraqi Communist party) until 1971 when a planned military coup by pro-Communist military officers was discovered by Sudan's ex-President Gaafar Neimeri. As a result of the failed attempt, the party's most prominent and best known leaders, Abdel Khalig Mahjub, Joseph Garang and Hashim Alatta, were executed. The SCP is led by Mohammed Ibrahim Nugud and plays a marginal role in Sudanese politics.

¶11. (U) The party has a small presence and membership in North Darfur. It is led by Mohammed Al Mubarak, a medical equipment technician in the hospital of the United Nations African Mission in Darfur UNAMID, together with a group of students and retired civil service workers. Prominent SCP leaders in North Darfur are Abdel Magid Ahmen Fadul, a radio operator working with UNAMID and Mohammed Badawi, Head of Al Amal Centre for Rehabilitation and Treatment of Victims of Torture. (Note: The SCP spokesman for North Darfur met with USG officials in El Fasher for the first time in May 2008. End Note)

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Democratic Unionist Party (DUP)  
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¶12. (U) The Democratic Unionist Party is Sudan's oldest party. Previously known as the National Unionist Party, it was renamed in 1967 by Sudan's first President, Ismaeel AlAzhari. The symbolic head of DUP is Al Sayed Mohammed Uthman Al Merghani, and the party's main platform is Sudan's unity. In recent years the party has become factionalized into as many as five different groups -- one of them even contributing members to the Government of National Unity (State Minister of Foreign Affairs Al-Samani Al-Wasila).

¶13. (U) DUP has long-standing relations with the Sudanese People's Liberation Movement (SPLM), with whom it signed the Peace deal of November 1988 in Ethiopia. (Note: The agreement was then opposed by the National Islamic Front party. End Note.) DUP enjoys good relationships with most other Sudanese political parties. DUP has two different branches in North Darfur, Democratic Unionist Party (Al Merghani Branch) and Democratic Unionist Party (Al Al Hindi Branch).

- Democratic Unionist Party (Al Merghani Branch):

DUP/Merghani has an office in Al Azama residential area in El Fasher and is headed by Mr. Ahmed Salih, Minister of Education. It has a large number of members and organizes activities, which are closely

monitored by the government. Prominent DUP members include Al Rasheed Makki, Head of North Darfur Chamber of Commerce; Mohammed Abdalla Neel, local businessman; and Idriss Atta Al Bari, Senior Traditional mediator. (Note: Although DUP members, including Chairman Makki, previously met with USG representatives in Darfur, the party has sometimes declined to meet with FieldOffs due to security concerns. End Note.)

- Democratic Unionist Party (Al Hindi Branch):

DUP/Hindi has an office in Al Zeiadia residential area in El Fasher, and approximately fifty members. Its activities are supported by North Darfur authorities, and DUP/Hindi officials were appointed (by the Wali) to local government positions, although its key figures are not influential in the community. DUP/ Hindi is headed by Mohammed Ahmed Ibrahim, a member of the North Darfur Legislative Council who previously worked as a private contractor in El Fasher's main market.

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Sudanese People's Liberation Movement (SPLM)  
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¶14. (U) The Sudanese People's Liberation Movement (SPLM), known collectively as Sudanese People's Liberation Army/Movement (SPLA/M), grew out of the armed movement that battled the Khartoum government in the civil war that lasted from 1983 to 2005. A signatory of the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement, the SPLM shares power with the NCP in Sudan's Government of National Unity and is the governing party in autonomous South Sudan. SPLM is headed by Salva Kiir Mayardit, First Vice President in the GNU, President of the Government of Southern Sudan (GoSS), and Commander in Chief of the SPLA. Although it originated from the grievances of the marginalized people of southern Sudan specifically, the SPLM's platform envisions a "New Sudan," built on a democratic and secular system of governance, and on the popular participation of all Sudanese citizens, and it is seeking to establish itself throughout the country.

¶15. (U) SPLM has a fledgling presence in North Darfur, with offices in the Al Azzama residential area of El Fasher. Prominent North Darfur SPLM leaders include Secretary General Al Sayed Hessein Neel, Deputy Secretary General Abdel Mjid Ahmed Fadul, Spokesman Ahmed Al Khateem, and North Darfur Minister of Health Abdel Shafee Issa Mustafa. The party has representation and membership in the local government and regular political activities. SPLM established a presence in El Fasher in April 2008. (Note: SPLM representatives meet regularly with USG officials in El Fasher. End note)

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Sudanese Liberation Movement/Minni Minawi (SLM/MM)  
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¶16. (U) The Sudanese Liberation Army faction led by Minni Minawi (SLA/MM) signed the Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA) in 2006, becoming a partner in the Government of National Unity. As part of the deal, Minni Minawi became a senior advisor to the President of Sudan, and the head of the Transitional Darfur Regional Authority. Since the signing of the DPA, SLA/MM has attempted to establish a political presence, however the fledgling party is still in the process of transitioning from an armed military faction to a political movement. The party, referred to as Sudanese Liberation Movement/Minni Minawi (SLM/MM), has no real political presence or activities in North Darfur state. Official political representatives, for example in the North Darfur Legislative Council, are still appointed by the SLA/MM leadership. Ismaeel Hussein Hashim is the Secretary General for SLM/MM in North Darfur, and both the faction and the movement claim the majority of their support from the Zaghawa tribe.

¶17. (SBU) Comment: The political party landscape in Darfur is overshadowed by the larger issues of war and displacement. With the militarization of the region, political parties have been obscured by rebel movements and the NCP-controlled security apparatus. Political parties and affiliations may become more relevant if there are ever elections in Darfur. But the reality will probably be that few of these factions will have much popular appeal in a credible political process in Darfur - the NCP and SPLM excepted because of their access to cash and resources. The violence, displacement and suffering in Darfur has discredited all political institutions to a

certain extent, especially among the large IDP population and there is a political vacuum that can be filled by whatever players are agile and clever enough to capitalize on the deep discontent of the local population.

FERNANDEZ